

# Student Volunteer Program

## National Weather Service

### Los Angeles/Oxnard, CA

#### **VOLUNTEER INTEREST**

Do you have an interest in the weather? Have you ever thought about being a weather forecaster? Are you wondering how your government works or what it might be like to work for the Federal Government? If you answered one or more of these questions positively, then perhaps you should consider becoming a student volunteer.

#### **VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

Generally speaking, Federal agencies are prohibited by law (section 1342 of title 31, United States Code) from accepting volunteer service. By this rule, no person may provide unpaid service to the Government or provide service with the understanding that he or she will waive pay.

However, there are exceptions to this rule, as follows:

- (1) Volunteer in emergencies involving the protection of life or property;
- (2) volunteer as an assistant to handicapped employees;
- (3) volunteer as an expert or consultant; and
- (4) volunteer as a student to further individual educational goals (keep reading).**

#### **STUDENT VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

The National Weather Service and NOAA offer unpaid training opportunities to students in high school and college. These opportunities provide work experience related to your academic program. The program allows you to explore career options as well as develop your personal and professional skills. As a student volunteer, you will be exposed to the Federal work environment and will learn about the missions and responsibilities of various Federal agencies and departments.

#### **VOLUNTEER SERVICE OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES**

Student Volunteer Service can enrich your future. Some of the benefits include:

- Career exploration early in your academic studies.
- Exposure to new and emerging occupations and professions.

- Academic credit for the work you perform. (This is determined by your academic institution.)
- Work experience which will enhance your ability to obtain paying jobs in the future.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

You are eligible to apply as a Student Volunteer if you are enrolled, at least half-time in:

- an accredited high school or trade school;
- a technical or vocational school;
- a junior or community college;
- a four-year college or university; or
- any other accredited educational institution.

## **WHAT DO STUDENT VOLUNTEERS DO?**

A lot of what a student volunteer does depends on their educational level, their academic pursuits, and what skills they bring with them. However, every volunteer will have the opportunity to work on a variety of stimulating and rewarding tasks. Some tasks will be fairly simple—like assembling outreach materials or performing data base quality control. More advanced students will have the opportunity to complete individual research work involving case studies of high impact weather events, or climatological studies involving severe weather and interesting weather phenomena like El Nino. Some student volunteers have had their research published as Western Region technical papers and others have been able to present their papers at National Weather Service workshops. In addition, student volunteers will have the opportunity to “shadow” National Weather Service forecasters as they issue forecasts, warnings and advisories to the public, aviation, marine, and fire fighting communities. The goal is to provide the student with an understanding of the profession of operational meteorology and an opportunity to work in an actual National Weather Service Forecast Office.

## **FOR HOW LONG AND WHEN WOULD YOU WORK?**

The period of volunteer work and the work schedule will depend on the availability of the student and on the needs of the National Weather Service. Most volunteers will work for several months—but some have worked for a year or more. The volunteer work period may be over the student’s summer break or even during the school year—depending on class schedules. Generally, during this period, students should be prepared to devote a minimum of several hours a week to volunteer service. Summertime volunteers will usually work 2 to 3 days a week.

## **HOW DO YOU BECOME A STUDENT VOLUNTEER?**

If you wish to apply for the NWS Los Angeles/Oxnard student volunteer program, complete the following actions.

- Fill out the attached application
- Attach a current resume
- Attach copies of transcripts [unofficial is OK]
- Mail the completed package to...

**National Weather Service Forecast Office**  
**520 North Elevar Street**  
**Oxnard, CA 93030**

Once we have evaluated your application package, a manager from the office will contact you via email regarding further actions.

## **TWO POINTS IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER**

**Please apply well in advance.** It can take up to two months to process the security paperwork required to grant access to the weather office.

**Finally, this is a "volunteer" program.** So students will not be paid for their time at the office. However, it may be possible for the student to earn class credit. This can be determined by the school's advisor or department head.

## **STUDENT EDUCATIONAL EMPLOYMENT**

Students interested in employment with the U.S. Government should investigate the various Student Educational Employment Programs that are offered. These programs are highly competitive and selection preference is sometimes given to former student volunteers.

Consult the USAJOBS website at <http://www.usajobs.gov/studentjobs/> for details.

**Adapted from the USAJOBS website, as of: 01/15/2010**